

**MINUTES OF THE
MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL
January 18, 2006**

Visit the MAC website at ct.gov/MAC

Dr. Linda Schwartz, Commissioner of Veterans' Affairs was the guest speaker. Dr. Schwartz spoke at 9:20 a.m., prior to the regular business meeting. A synopsis of her presentation is below.

There are 310,000 veterans in the State of Connecticut. Over 8,000 of our guard and reserve members have been activated since the events of September 11, 2001. Recently 500 troop members from Connecticut were deployed. This group represented 135 of the 169 municipalities in our state. There are currently 510 veterans in residence at the Rocky Hill facility.

The Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) has five Offices for Advocacy and Assistance, one in each congressional district. The offices are located in Rocky Hill, Norwich, West Haven, Bridgeport and Waterbury. The office staff are dedicated to providing assistance to veterans and their families.

By way of an historical fact, in 1863, a businessman who had a vision about the care of our returning Civil War veterans visited President Abraham Lincoln. The businessman felt these soldiers were owed a debt of gratitude for their sacrifice. In 1864, the idea became a reality, with the establishment of the nation's first veterans' home, Fitch's Home for Soldiers and Their Orphans. The businessman was a wealthy philanthropist, Benjamin Fitch, from Darien, Connecticut.

Dr. Schwartz indicated that the mission of state service is to positively influence the lives of our people, and that networking with other agency commissioners has been a key to reaching veterans statewide and assisting them with access to services. This networking also serves the purpose of providing veterans and their families with support and a safety net.

Dr. Schwartz highlighted the following initiatives:

- The Rocky Hill VA campus will be beginning a construction project, to construct a new 125-bed facility and renovate the veterans' domicile. The federal government is providing a grant of \$32 million, which funds two-thirds of the cost of this project.
- There is now a legislative committee for veterans and military issues.
- There is a \$500 thousand state relief fund for veterans, administered by the Connecticut National Guard. Taxpayers can contribute additional funds through a state income tax check-off. There is also a line item of \$1 million in the DMHAS budget for outreach to veterans in need of mental health and substance abuse services.

- The federal government sponsors a Wounded Warrior Project. This provides \$50 thousand per veteran to adapt their homes and \$12 thousand per veteran to adapt their vehicle to accommodate a disability. It also provides up to \$100 thousand to family members who need to travel and lose time from work to be with and care for a disabled veteran.
- Burial plot and funeral arrangements are provided by DVA for eligible veterans at no charge. There are three state cemeteries in Darien, Middletown, and Rocky Hill. Headstones are also provided and installed free of charge. Any veteran who had other than a Dishonorable Discharge is eligible for Final Honors. A volunteer group carries out this ceremony. Due to the aging of the long-term population at Rocky Hill, there are about one or two deaths a week.
- A total of \$1,000,000 was earmarked from the sale of Fairfield Hills Hospital to assist veterans transitioning home from Iraq and Afghanistan.
- Information on services is available on the Department of Veterans' Affairs website at ct.gov/ctva. A new toll-free hotline, available 24/7, will be announced shortly. The department is also launching Vet Express, an outreach program that will provide case management, orchestrate a support system for veterans in need, and help them navigate the bureaucracy. There are also four Veterans' Centers, that provide a program of Help without Hassles.

Dr. Schwartz encouraged state managers to be the eyes and ears for our state's veterans, being alert to their issues and needs. State managers can play an important role by being attuned to veterans with whom they come in contact in the workplace and in the community.

Joe Amend, MAC Chair, called the regular business meeting to order at 10:30 a.m.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the December 21, 2005 meeting were adopted unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

Peter Bucknall reported that the balance remains at \$2399.02 as of December 31, 2005. The Treasurer's report was accepted.

Committee Reports

Credentials. Elise Kremer reported in the absence of Ellen Carter, the Credentials Chair. The following are the results from five elections for MAC representatives and alternates:

Military: Anthony Lewis, Representative
 Thomas Thomas, Alternate

Banking: Percy Cave, Representative
 Claudia Helfgott, Alternate

Motor Vehicles: Joseph Lembo, Representative
 Nancy McCorkle, Alternate

Special Revenue: Bette Jenak, Representative
 Mike Janusko, Alternate

Public Works: Jerry Glassman, Representative
 Bruce Cornish, Alternate

Elections are still to be held at the following departments: Labor, Mental Retardation, and Transportation. The State Library will contact Ellen in writing with their election results.

Old Business

Speakers and Logistics. Elise has sent a letter to Linda Yelmini, DAS Commissioner about speaking at an upcoming meeting. Elise will follow up for confirmation of a date.

Bonnie Delaney offered to speak to the State Librarian to speak at an upcoming meeting.

Vivian McWatt offered to speak with Donald Downes, Chairman of the Board of Commissioners for DPUC about being a guest speaker.

Wanda Seldon suggested the possibility of touring the Department of Transportation's Incident Command Center.

Elise will confirm a specific date for the DAS Commissioner and then contact Vivian to provide an open date for Chairman Downes.

Meeting with Administration Officials. Joe will be attempting to get the follow-up meeting scheduled.

Minutes of the Management Advisory Council
January 18, 2006

Managers Day. A meeting will be scheduled the week of January 23 for all who are interested and volunteered to work on the event.

Web Site. Anne MacLeod reported that all the minutes of prior meetings appear to be in place.

Communications Committee. Tom Crafa reported that he has met with DOIT personnel twice and that the discussion board is just about complete. He acknowledged the assistance of DOIT in bringing this effort to fruition.

New Business

There were no items of new business.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:55 a.m. The next MAC meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 25, 2006 at 9:00 a.m.

The list of those in attendance at the January 18, 2006 MAC meeting is attached and is hereby made a part of these minutes.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mark Polzella
MAC Secretary
MAC Representative for the
Department of Labor

MAC ATTENDANCE ROSTER
January 18, 2006

<u>DEPARTMENT</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>REP/ALT/GUEST</u>
Banking	Percy Cave	R
Children and Families	Gary Zera	R
Economic and Community Development	Sheila Hummel	R
Information Technology	Anne MacLeod	R
Labor	Mark Polzella	Secretary
Mental Health and Addiction Services	Priscilla Scherger	A
Mental Retardation	Jadwiga Gocłowski	R
Mental Retardation	Penny Davis	A
Motor Vehicles	Joseph Lembo	R
Policy and Management	Joe Amend	Chair
Public Health	Elise Kremer	Vice-Chair
Public Utility Control	Vivian McWatt	R
Public Works	Jerry Glassman	R
Revenue Services	Tom Crafa	R
Social Services	Peter Bucknall	Treasurer
Special Revenue	Bette Jenak	R
State Library	Bonnie Delaney	R
Transportation	Wanda Seldon	R
Veterans' Affairs	Babatunde Green	R
Veterans' Affairs	Nancy Buturuga	R